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Appropriations Committee
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW)
Budget Hearing
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Written Testimony In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
From Individuals Who Could Not Attend the Public Hearing

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**Written Testimony of
Susan S. Addiss
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian:

I write on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, which the Governor's proposed budget would eliminate. This seems to me to be a classic example of penny-wise and pound-foolish. Over the 35 years of its existence, PCSW has had a significant impact on the lives of CT's women. But there is still much work to do on their behalf, and without this Commission, I am afraid that it will not get done.

PCSW's work has resulted in improvements in the economic and financial security, as well as the health and safety of CT's women. The Commission has addressed such important women's issues as sexual harassment, family and medical leave, gender-specific health insurance coverage, and trafficking, to name just a few. It has recommended policies in these areas, many of which have been realized in state legislation or administrative procedures. It has also conducted training in these and many other areas, and has carried out research to cast light on the issues it addresses. Such documents as the Report Card on the Status of Women 2009 provide bases for action by the Legislature and by women's advocacy groups throughout the state.

One such group, the CT Women's Health Campaign, is a spinoff of PCSW. Formed in 1994, it has been a tireless advocate for improvements in women's health for 15 years, prioritizing the issues each year, and working to achieve the passage of appropriate legislation or regulation. We have been able to check off many items on our annual lists as the years have gone by, but we could not have done so without the in-kind support of PCSW.

Still inadequately addressed are such important issues as the continued poverty of female-headed families in Connecticut and the health and related problems of women prisoners in our state. Without PCSW to provide us with the research necessary to develop wise interventions and the training and education needed to carry them out, I fear a setback in the long struggle to improve the status of Connecticut's women. Such a setback will affect the well-being of men and children in the state as well.

That is why I believe it would be penny-wise and pound-foolish to eliminate the Commission. I hope that you and your committee will agree, and find a way, even in these difficult times, to continue the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Susan S. Addiss, MPH, MUrS
Former CT Commissioner of Health
Executive Committee, CT Women's Health Campaign

From: Carol Buckheit [mailto:carol@lmfct.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 11:21 AM
To: Rep. Geragosian, John
Subject: PCSW

Hi John,

I hope all is well—I saw you at the Rutgers game last week, but couldn't get your attention to say hi!

I am just writing to express my concern about the PCSW. I know that the Governor's budget has proposed eliminating PCSW, and I can't ask you enough to do everything in your power to ensure that won't happen. There simply still is a long way for women to go, John, in so many arenas—from equal pay for equal work (Lily Ledbetter comes to mind), protection from domestic violence, to protecting our reproductive rights. PCSW insures that women continue to be at the table and continue to have a voice, and there is no more stronger voice for women in Connecticut than PCSW and Teresa Younger.

I trust that you are carefully looking at other options to ensure that PCSW survives these tough economic times. I don't envy your task, but I do have the utmost confidence that preserving the PCSW will benefit women and the state of Connecticut for years to come.

Sincerely,

Carol Buckheit

Carol Buckheit
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Written Testimony of Cari Carter-Pierides – Meriden, CT
Before the Appropriations Committee
Re: The Importance of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Good afternoon Sen. Harp and Rep. Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. I wanted to speak today in support of keeping the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women alive and well for years to come. As many of you know the PCSW has made amazing steps forward for women in CT by addressing issues like sex discrimination, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, economic security for women and the list goes on. More importantly the PCSW has empowered women of all ages to seek out their path in life and I am proud to say I am one of those women.

My involvement with the PCSW started when I was a grad student at the UConn School of Social Work. I had attended a training on how to work with the press, and to this day I still use elements from that training in my work as a community organizer for a non profit organization. I realize this may not seem like much but for me and the others in that training and other trainings that followed it was a stepping stone towards feeling confident and prepared for our future professions. Once I was entered the work force after graduation I continued my involvement with the PCSW. As a new social worker I felt at home as a member of the Connecticut Women's' Health Campaign – a coalition of experts and advocates working to improve the health care of women and girls. Through my work with the Campaign I realized that I had a passion for women's health issues and that there were opportunities to be involved in making healthcare more accessible and affordable for women and their families. This passion led me to a job as a healthcare organizer for a non profit organization that works with the statewide Healthcare4every1 Campaign. That is where I am right now, but my journey with the PCSW did not end there. In 2006, I was asked to be involved with a new program that the PCSW was starting called the Young Women's Leadership Program. This group of young women not only cared about the issues of young women in CT they also realized that they needed a voice at the legislature. The issues that young women deal with are different than those of women and those of girls, so to be a part of a group that was ready to bring this voice to the table was an amazing experience. Through this experience with the YWLP, I was introduced to so many amazing young women and realized that there were opportunities to get even more involved in issues dealing directly with young women and health care. I took the experience I had working with the YWLP and got involved with the NARAL Pro-Choice CT, where I am currently the chair of their Political Action Committee. My journey isn't over yet, not even close, and I know that the PCSW will continue to help guide my career and my work as an advocate for women's healthcare issues.

I am strongly encouraging you to keep PCSW alive and well for generations to come, there is still much work to be done and many young women ready to be trained and guided to do it.

Thank you for your time.

Cari Carter-Pierides, Meriden, CT
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Connecticut

January 9, 2009

Ms. Teresa Younger
Executive Director
CONNECTICUT PERMANENT COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06108

Dear Teresa:

As the only professional association for commissions on women, the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) recognizes and appreciates the long-standing leadership of the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). From its early days, NACW has benefited from the productive participation of the PCSW, including having one of your commissioners, Pat Hendel, serve capably as president. Her guidance and mentorship of not only our organization but many of our members is an honored part of our legacy.

Additionally, the PCSW has unselfishly shared its ideas and experience with commissions across the country, providing much needed real-life reference for countless women's commissions. In this unique work that we do, it is crucial that those who possess talent and expertise counsel new and developing commissions to ensure their success.

From the officers and board of NACW, thank you for the support of the Commissioners and Staff of PCSW for your continuing support of women in Connecticut and our nation. You are examples of what we can all be, and we appreciate the opportunity to emulate your outstanding commission and example.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Coffey
President

The National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) is committed to equality and justice for women by increasing the effectiveness of member commissions and serving as their national voice.

Randi Frank Consulting, LLC
7 Promontory Drive
Wallingford, CT 06492
February 10, 2009

Senator Toni Harp and Representative John Geragosian
Appropriation Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Appropriation Committee

I am unable to attend the hearing set for February 11th related to the funding of the PCSW so I am sending this letter instead.

Many people will testify about all the wonderful things that PCSW have accomplished in the past such as those items listed on the attached fact sheet. I have worked with PCSW when I was a municipal employee and have been in a sense a client since 2000 when I became a women owned business. They are a tremendous support to women owned businesses.

The example I would like to talk about is one where I have some expertise. I was trained to provide sexual harassment prevention training for municipal governments by the previous director of PCSW. I have used this skill to provide sexual harassment prevention training as a consultant. Even though the law about preventing sexual harassment and the law related to training of supervisors about sexual harassment have been in place for over 20 years I still handle questions about this issue on a regular basis. Without PCSW this important issue that women have to deal with will not be on the front burner. This is only one example of what PCSW has done for women in the workplace.

I understand the State budget needs to be reduced because of the economy but the PCSW should not be eliminated completely – Women need an advocate.

Sincerely,

Ms. Randi Frank,
Managing Member

From: patient_advocate@sbcglobal.net [mailto:patient_advocate@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 4:38 PM
To: Rep. Geragosian, John; Senator Harp
Subject: Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian:

I am writing to urge you to ensure the continued funding of the Permanent Commission for the Status of Women (PCSW).

As you may recall, when I served as an Assistant Attorney General, I represented the State in litigation to protect access to a reproductive health care facility in Bridgeport. Later, when I was in private practice, I represented the same clinic, defending it against costly, baseless litigation aimed at closing it down. Since this clinic was the only clinic in that part of the State that served women on Medicaid, it was critical that we keep it open. I could not have succeeded without the support and assistance of the PCSW, which helped organize public and media support for the facility.

Now that I work full-time as an advocate for patients with chronic illnesses, I have come to better know the PCSW's work in the area of health care. Of course, we all know that women in Connecticut would be without insurance coverage of contraceptives and overnight stays for mastectomies were it not for the PCSW. But the PCSW has quietly led the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign, which has worked to promote the health of all women -- including caregivers, the majority of whom are women -- in our State.

Personally, I have benefitted greatly from the PCSW. The PCSW allowed me to believe that I could start my own business and become economically self-sufficient. When I have been at critical junctures in the growth of my business, the PCSW's leadership has always been available to counsel me and assist me to ensure our longevity.

When I think of Connecticut without the PCSW, I picture a very different Connecticut. The leadership of the PCSW - from Leslie Gabel-Brett to the late, beloved Ruth Pulda to the fabulous Teresa Younger -- have been essential to the character of Connecticut. We are a State in which women are equal and can succeed because of the leadership provided by the PCSW. It saddens me that a woman Governor -- who might not be Governor were it not for the work of the PCSW promoting the inclusion of women in public positions -- could fail to recognize the critical nature of the PCSW's presence. Women can afford to be less afraid to shoot for the stars because the PCSW has always been there with support, encouragement, and important public policy work.

You will, no doubt, hear from many Connecticut citizens about the work of the PCSW because it has played such an integral role in so many of our lives. The Commission's work is legendary, but the Commission's importance goes beyond its many accomplishments. The PCSW makes Connecticut a safe place for women to live, work, succeed, and thrive.

There is a reason the word "permanent" is in the name of the PCSW. For a Commission to be truly independent, and to work on behalf of underrepresented minorities, it must not fear for its continued existence. The Commission's permanence is part of its success. Women (and men) in Connecticut must be able to believe the General Assembly when it creates a "permanent" resource -- a watchdog, a defender of the unpopular, a maverick.

The PCSW's budget will not break the bank, so to speak. But its elimination will leave a void that no amount of tax dollars can replace. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to preserve, protect, and defend the PCSW, on which the women of Connecticut rely for their very well-being. J

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**Written Testimony of Sally Joughin
Before the Appropriations Committee
In support of Several State Commissions
Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

We wish that we did not need special legislation and special support commissions for various groups in America which have significant numbers of members. Unfortunately we still have to focus on the rights and needs of African-Americans, Latinos, and women in our society, to ensure that their voices are heard and that they achieve equal opportunities and equal treatment in all areas of life. I am surprised that the Governor, who belongs to one of these groups, wants to cut funding for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. And the other two commissions, representing minorities that are often disadvantaged and oppressed, are also very important to our state. Each has its own mission, although their goals may be similar.

My own organization, People Against Injustice, has crafted and submitted legislation to create a DOC Advisory Commission, to review the policies and practices of that very large and costly agency, and suggest any improvements that are needed. I mention that because, in our proposal, we have included as commission members a representative from the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and from the African-American and Latino/Puerto Rican Affairs Commissions. Why? Because these 3 commissions look out for the interests of their constituents, some of whom are involved in the criminal justice system – both as inmates and as employees. We recognize their importance.

I hope that the Appropriations Committee can find some areas in which to cut funding where something is no longer needed or has been over-funded. Don't cut so that less advantaged people would not be getting the services or the representation that they need.

As a criminal justice reformer, I can tell you that CT is spending way too much on its prison system, because there are many individuals who should be in programs instead of prison, which would be much less costly. And if savings were then transferred to education, jobs and services in the cities, you would see a lot less people entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

That's how to save money for our state. Apparently the Governor is not aware of this.

Don't let her cut the good programs.

Sally Joughin
14 Everit Street
New Haven CT 06511
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Wider Opportunities for Women

**Written Testimony of
Wider Opportunities for Women
Before the Appropriations Committee
Supporting the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in support of preserving the unique mission of and continuing the vital work of the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. This dynamic organization has achieved numerous successes on behalf of Connecticut women, women who contribute to the state's coffers and women who contribute to the stability of families, communities and work forces. WOW encourages Connecticut lawmakers to continue to fully fund the work of the PCSW as the PCSW has proven its ability to produce data-driven results from expanding public awareness of what it takes for Connecticut families to make ends meet to forward-thinking legislative initiatives that facilitate the economic security, health and well-being of women and their families.

It has been WOW's distinct honor to work in partnership with the PCSW for many years as we built and continue to enhance the body of knowledge known as the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project. This effort has included the production of a Self-Sufficiency Standard for the state and contributions to the release of the PCSW's report, "Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands." More recently WOW and the PCSW have collectively embarked on a mission, the Elder Economic Security Initiative, to determine the baseline needs of Connecticut's seniors to determine the income levels which would allow seniors to age in place with economic security for themselves and to maintain the dignity they deserve. The new Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index for the Five Connecticuts will be released by PCSW, in partnership with WOW, in early March. Without the PCSW in Connecticut, WOW would lose an invaluable partner in this effort. The testimony that follows outlines our support and rationale for maintaining in its current form and function, the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

For more than 40 years, WOW has been a dynamic organization, seeking to improve the economic well-being of women and girls through advocacy, organizing, coalition-building, training, and public awareness activities. WOW has and continues to work throughout the country and in Washington, D.C. fighting for programs and resources to prepare women and girls for jobs that will support their families and them. For example, WOW developed the country's first women's employment resource center women and nurtured similar centers around the U.S. WOW helped define —non-traditional occupations (NTOs) for women, advocated for federal laws to increase women's participation in NTOs by giving women the skills to earn high wages and economic security and undertook demonstration projects around the country. WOW demonstrates the interconnectedness of issues from child care, reproductive health and welfare policies to tax policies, workforce and economic development. From teen-focused programs like the Connections

to Career series to those assessing the economic impact of long-term care for seniors, WOW addresses issues affecting women and their families today—within and across generations—work that compliments and contributes to the work of the PCSW.

WOW applauds the work of the PCSW over its 35-year history, a history marked with momentous victories working in partnership with the state legislature including the first family and medical leave protections and more recent work on adequately compensating Connecticut's child care workers. The PCSW team has testified on over 75 bills before this legislative body, providing expert testimony to lawmakers at no additional cost to the state. By providing training services to state employees at no cost, the PCSW instills necessary learning including sexual harassment awareness and prevention training and allows the state to realize savings by not having to let contracts for this work.

The PCSW's work does not stop at the doors to capitol. The PCSW reaches across the state to provide training services including a young women's leadership program, pre-apprenticeship training and other training for women who work in the trades. Indicative of the PCSW's willingness to bring like-minded and disparate mindsets to the table, the commission has led or participated in over 25 coalitions and 12 task forces in the last year alone. These efforts to coalesce partners, to produce consensus and find solutions comes at much less than its market value by having the PCSW engaged. The expense to the state in the absence of a PCSW extend well beyond the lack of cohesiveness engendered among advocates without coalitions to the price of having policy work produced at a fee by outside providers or the stunted leadership skills of the next generation without access to the commission's leadership program or the cost to the state's coffers of revenues lost when women are not paid fairly in the workplace.

WOW is proud to be numbered among the many partners of the PCSW. As mentioned, WOW leads the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project in 37 states and the District of Columbia. WOW's new Elder Economic Security Initiative assists policymakers, advocates, and providers in twelve states develop programs so seniors may age in place with dignity and economic security. The PCSW in Connecticut is a valued partner in both efforts. Through these projects WOW and our partners are helping to change the public dialogue from one of poverty to one of economic security at the national level and in state legislatures. In this instance, the PCSW's continued existence insures state lawmakers, advocates and voters in Connecticut will have access to the most current data, policies and best practices from across the nation—all flowing through the analytical lens offered to CT opinion-makers, policy-makers, practitioners and residents by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. On more than one occasion the work of the PCSW has made Connecticut the model for the nation including the commission's pre-apprenticeship training program.

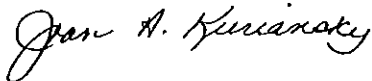
I must mention that many of our state partners find themselves somewhat envious of Connecticut as they have no government entities which have as their mission the identification of issues affecting the status of women and the provision of leadership and information to policy-makers and the public in order to improve the status of women. Without a centralized repository of research, without a designated liaison to their legislative bodies, without an entity charged with the oversight, coordination and assessment of programs and practices in state agencies as they affect women, our colleagues in many other states can only wish for the resource you have here in the CT PCSW. The foresight of your forbearers in creating the PCSW certainly underscores the leadership Connecticut has offered so many times dating to an era before our nation existed. Let not that foresight or that leadership be lost today.

WOW's board of directors, staff and partner organizations across the country stand with the PCSW. We know that policy-makers face a strained budget and must look for ways to reduce expenses. However, eliminating the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women presents a cost to the families of Connecticut that they simply cannot afford, a cost which will be borne out across generations from this day forward, and may well mark the end of significant gains for women in this state. Without the PCSW who will speak for your constituents? For women in the workforce? For families who face the struggles of caring for children and aging parents? For women who are denied necessary health care or face exponentially increasing health insurance costs? For families who depend on two incomes to make ends meet but lack access to quality benefits such as time to attend parent-teacher conferences or to take children or parents to medical appointments? For struggling women laid off in the current economic crisis but ineligible for unemployment insurance? Who will rally for them and present you with policy options that ease the burden on Connecticut families and contribute to a higher standard of living in this state? Who, without the PCSW?

We respect the need to balance the state's budget, but we request that you not do so by eliminating such a respected and vigilant entity as the PCSW. We ask that you honor the permanent nature of the commission and the ongoing need for its work in economic and financial security, health and safety, and anti-discrimination efforts by restating your support and by fully funding the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about our work with the PCSW, please contact us as directed below. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Humbly submitted this day, February 11th, in the year, 2009, by,



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February 11, 2009

Senator Toni Harp
Representative John Geragosian
Appropriation Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106

Public Testimony of Deborah L. McKenna

My name is Deborah McKenna. I am an attorney at Outten & Golden, LLP in Stamford and a resident of Milford, CT. I have been in practice since 1996, and my work has always focused on employee rights and women's issues. I first met Leslie Brett, the PCSW's former Executive Director during law school, when I was an intern at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund and later, when she taught my "Women and The Law" class at UCONN. That was also my first opportunity to learn about the PCSW and the important service it provides to all of the citizens of Connecticut.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments, I am unable to attend today's Appropriations Committee in person. However, I wanted to share my thoughts with this committee, as I have had a unique opportunity to represent the PCSW on a few matters over the past years and have witnessed first hand the vital function this agency serves for Connecticut.

Prior to my tenure with Outten & Golden, LLP, I was a partner at Livingston, Adler, Pulda, Meiklejohn & Kelly, PC in Hartford. I am sure many of you knew Ruth Pulda, one of my former law partners, mentor and friend. In 1997, Ruth and I were working with a coalition of women's groups in connection with issues related to the proposed Avon Surgery Center. As some of you may recall, a group of hospitals in central Connecticut – including UCONN's John Dempsey Medical Center, St. Francis Hospital, Hartford Hospital and New Britain General Hospital had proposed to open a surgery center to serve patients in Avon. Despite the fact that one of the partners in this venture was a state institution, St. Francis sought to enforce the Catholic directives on the center – which in the groups' opinion meant that the medical care that could be provide to female patients would be restricted in ways that the care provided to male

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patients would not be. Since the proposal first had to be approved by the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA), which was required to hold public hearings on the proposal, there was an opportunity for us to get involved. The coalition and the PCSW sought legal status to intervene in the proceedings, in order to further investigate the impact this center would potentially have on women's health care in the state. OHCA recognized PCSW's unique mandate with regard to women's issues and its role as a state agency of sorts and granted PCSW's request. During those proceedings, PCSW was able to raise many issues related to how women's health care would be provided at the proposed facility and make its voice heard. This was the first of a number of similar proceedings and issues that developed with regard to women's health care in the 1990s and early 2000s.

In 2005, PCSW learned that Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, CT had filed paperwork with OHCA requesting permission to close its ob/gyn clinic. This clinic had a long history of providing necessary care to many women in Southeastern Connecticut, particularly those who were low income. Again, through PCSW's status as a state agency, we were able to achieve intervener status in the public hearing before OHCA. The hearing took place at Mitchell College, on a snowy day in March 2005, before a room of community leaders, hospital officials, L & M employees and patients. At the time, Ruth, Leslie and I had agreed that I would be lead counsel at the hearing. Having been through the process before, we expected that we would be granted some time at the end of the proceedings to pose our questions and make concerns known. However, once OHCA convened the hearing, it became clear that the PCSW was going to be permitted a much larger and more meaningful role – with OHCA permitting us to do the initial cross-examination of the hospital executives. I think that this was direct result of the reputation that the PCSW had developed as an advocate on these issues and in deference to its legislative mandate. In the end, OHCA denied the Hospital's proposal – in large part because it had not shown sufficient evidence that it had a plan to ensure adequate and continuity of health care for women in this area. Had the PCSW not been there – I do not know that the issues would have come across so clearly and so effectively.

The stories detailed above are just a few of the many examples of the important functions of the PCSW. While there are other effective women's organizations in Connecticut, the unique mandate of the PCSW gives it the power, access and ability to expose issues of discrimination and fight against discrimination in a way that no other organization can. The PCSW is also able to give voice to women in the state who are often without a voice – the low income or immigrant women, young women and old women, who may have difficulty having their voices heard. In these challenging financial times, these are the members of our citizenry who are most at risk for discriminatory treatment and who need an effective advocate.

If the proposal to close this agency is accepted, it will be a dark day for women's rights in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time.


Deborah L. McKenna

Testimony of Julia Wayner
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). As you go forward in these trying economic times, I implore you to maintain the state's focus on women, and issues relevant to women. I can not stress enough how important it is for the PCSW to remain intact and active despite the budgetary constraints you now face.

One to the many gems that the PCSW provides is the Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP). As a member of the YWLP I have had the distinct privilege to meet other young women within the Connecticut area from different professional backgrounds. The opportunity not only to network, but also to share experiences has been invaluable to my personal growth. Many of the issues that we as women face can be isolating and demoralizing when there is no support, but thanks to the YWLP a strong network of like minded women meet regularly sharing experiences and helping one another. The YWLP is vital to ensuring the empowerment of today's and tomorrow's Connecticut leaders.

Recently some have said that we don't need a commission on women because we have a female governor, treasurer, secretary of state and comptroller so women have reached equality. To make the conclusion that just because some women have succeeded in public office means that we have reached true equality is outlandish. I work in engineering and information technology- both are fields that are still very male dominated and don't even come close to the equal representation of men and women. Because of working in a male dominated field I worry about being "mommy tracked", or not being able to advance my career because managers view women with children as somehow less committed than men with families. Until we have reached equality in the professional arena we can't even begin to claim that we have reached true equality.

In addition to advocating for young women and the issues I previously mentioned, the PCSW provides the state with a cost savings. The PCSW provides the state with free sexual

harassment awareness and prevention training saving the state an estimated \$200,000 plus. Without the PCSW the state would be forced to hire consultants to administer the training at \$400 to \$600 per session. The consultants providing the training have a vested interest in the service as opposed to the genuine interest that the staff from the PCSW exhibits lending a higher level of quality to the training. Having established a tangible dollar benefit that PCSW provides to the state, we should also consider the intentions behind the formation of the PCSW.

When the PCSW was formed in 1973 by the General Assembly, it was not simply called, the "commission on the status of women", it was specifically named the *Permanent* Commission on the Status of Women. The word "permanent" is key. The mission of the PCSW is evolutionary in nature; it does not have a definitive end for there is no quintessential goal that defines its lifespan. The PCSW's purpose is to represent the needs and voices of **over half** of the state's population on the priority issues that will continue to evolve in nature throughout the coming years.

Today, you may be surprised to learn that women still only earn 78 cents on the dollar in comparison with their male counterparts. You may also be astonished to learn that female dominated professions, such as childcare, yield a sufficiently lower income level leaving women within these professions near poverty.

The message is clear, we need action, we need focus, and we need the PCSW to help support those causes new and old that left unsupported will hinder the growth of 51% of this state's population. We need the PCSW to continue championing women's issues so that women's issues remain in the forefront.

We need you, as legislators, to support this commission by ensuring that it remains fully funded. Thank you for your time and consideration.